

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion and in view of the present amendment, is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

Claim 1 is amended. Claims 6-8 and 11 have been allowed. Claims 12-19 are added. Claims 1-19 are pending in the application and under consideration.

Item 6: Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, at page 3, item 6, claims 1-5 and 9-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,678,714 to Olapurath et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed because Olapurath does not teach or suggest:

the work performing elements each storing operating programs for respectively executing one or more task units, and performing work by executing the operating programs in the order of the execution sequence, on the basis of the set of task units with an assigned execution sequence output by said information processing device; and

the information processing device receiving notifications for executability from the work performing elements, and sending an execution command to one of the work performing elements having sent one of said received notifications for executability,

as recited in amended independent claim 1.

As a non-limiting example, the present invention is a production cell that includes an information processing device and a plurality of work performing elements. The information processing device outputs a work command consisting of a set of task units, having an order, to the work performing elements. The work performing elements determine whether a specified task unit can be executed, and the work performing elements that can execute the specified task unit notify the information processing device that the task unit may be executed. The work performing elements that can execute the specified task indicate to the information processing device the task efficiency of the specified task unit. The information processing device selects the most efficient work performing element to perform the task unit and outputs an execution command to the specified work performing element to execute the task unit.

Olapurath discusses a plurality of fulfillers that perform tasks output by a task server. The fulfiller is either a person or a software object. A fulfiller Inbox displays requested tasks that have been assigned to the specific task fulfiller. The fulfiller performs the tasks in an order decided by and at the discretion of the fulfiller. The fulfiller performs the task based on

instructions displayed. Once the fulfiller has performed a task, he or she informs the task server of the same. While Olapurath discusses specific tasks being fulfilled, Olapurath does not discuss that the work performing element (in this case, the fulfiller) determines which tasks may be executed by the specific work performing element. The task, routed to a service unit, is merely assigned to a fulfiller associated with that service unit. The fulfiller makes no specific determination that the fulfiller (i.e., work performing element) can perform a specific task unit. The fulfiller merely performs the task, then informs the task server that the task has been performed. Olapurath does not discuss that the work performing elements send notifications for executability to the information processing device, nor does Olapurath discuss that upon receiving the notifications for executability, the information processing device then sends an execution command to one of the work performing elements that sent the notification for executability.

Therefore, since Olapurath does not discuss or suggest that “the information processing device receiv[es] notifications for executability from the work performing elements, and send[s] an execution command to one of the work performing elements having sent one of said received notifications for executability,” as recited in independent claim 1, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Olapurath.

Claims 2-5 and 9-10 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 1, and include all the features of that claim, plus additional features that are not taught or suggested by the prior art. For example, claim 9 recites that “a new work command can be received and work tasks corresponding to said new work command can be executed, while executing work tasks corresponding to another work command already received.” Therefore, as claims 2-5 and 9-10 are dependent on independent claim 1, they are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons noted above.

Item 7: Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 6-8 and 11 are allowed.

New Claims

New independent claim 12 recites a production system comprising:

work performing elements in communication with the information processing device and receiving the work command from the information processing device, each of the work performing elements making a determination as to whether the work performing element can execute one of the task units and sending

a notification for executability to the information processing device
if the task unit is executable.

Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests such. It is submitted that the new claim 12, which is different from the prior filed claims, distinguishes over the prior art.

New claim 15 recites that the features of the present invention include a method of executing a sequence of task units, comprising:

outputting a work command as a set of task units from an
information processing device to a plurality of work performing
elements;

receiving, at the work performing elements, the work command
from the information processing device; and

determining, at each of the work performing elements, whether the
specific work performing element can execute at least one of the
task units that is to be executed next.

Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests such. It is submitted that the new claim 15, which is different from the prior filed claims, distinguishes over the prior art.

New claims 13-14 and 16-19 depend from claims 12 and 15, respectively, and inherit the limitations of independent claims 12 and 15, plus recite additional features which distinguish over the prior art. For example, claim 13 recites that "the work performing element notifying the information processing device that execution of one of the task units is possible sends a task efficiency value of the executable task unit." Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests such. It is submitted that these new claims distinguish over the prior art.

Conclusion

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 1 has been amended. Claims 6-8 and 11 were allowed. Claims 12-19 were added. Claims 1-19 are pending in the application and under consideration.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

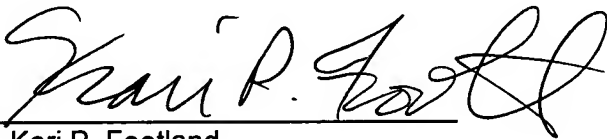
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 1/12/06

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